

Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel

Date: Thursday, 17 February 2022

Time: 10:00

Venue: Cathedral Room

Present: Councillor Mrs Christine Finlayson, Councillor Colin Glover, Councillor David Shepherd, Councillor Miss Jeanette Whalen
Councillor John Collier (for Councillor Mrs Ann McKerrell), Councillor David Morton (for Councillor Fiona Robson)

Also Present: Councillor Mrs Mitchell (as substitute member)
Councillor John Mallinson - Leader
Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Mallinson - Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder
Ms Minns, Mrs Yeates and Mr Yeates - Friends of Carlisle Victorian and Turkish Baths

Officers: Deputy Chief Executive
Neighbourhood Services Manager
Policy and Performance Officer (x2)
Sergeant Blain - Cumbria Constabulary

HWSP.11/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Ann McKerrell and Councillor Fiona Robson.

HWSP.12/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declaration of interest submitted.

HWSP.13/22 PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED - It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public and items of business in Part B be dealt with in private.

HWSP.14/22 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED - The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2022 were approved as a correct record.

HWSP.15/22 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

There were no items which had been the subject of call-in.

HWSP.16/22 LOCAL HUB DEVELOPMENTS (COMMUNITY SAFETY)

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted an update on the work of the Carlisle Local Focus Hub (Hub) along with proposals for establishing the Hub within the City Council by appointing a fixed term Hub Manager (CS.08/22).

The Deputy Chief Executive set out the background to the Hub; its Terms of Reference; the partners involved and the performance of the Hub. He detailed the proposals for the development and longer term sustainability of Local Focus Hubs.

Sergeant Blain, Cumbria Constabulary, gave an overview of how the Hub operates in terms of: working with partners; data sharing agreements; and consideration of the impact of Local Government Reorganisation.

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder advised that she was an attendee of Hub meetings where a wide range of issues were considered with a view to improving the quality of life for residents. Visits had been undertaken to the districts of Allerdale and Copeland where the Hub was provided in-house by the local authority which worked very well. With the creation of new councils next year it was important that the proposal for the Hub set out in the report were implemented and embedded.

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that, in relation to the recommendations set out in the report, were the proposal not to be agreed the Police would not cease the provision of its resources; the administration of the referral service and the data sharing agreement would remain in place.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- What was the cost of the proposed Officer role, and how would their performance be measured.

Sergeant Blain advised that there was an existing performance framework to track the progression of issues which could be adapted to assess Officer performance, another aspect would be inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. Given that adjacent district councils already operated an in house hub, it was hoped to liaise with them on the development of a performance framework for the post. Sergeant Blain undertook to circulate a copy of the Hub performance framework to the Panel.

The Deputy Chief Executive added that the cost of the post was set out and provided for in the Council's approved budget. It had yet to be decided which team within the Council would host the Officer, but it was likely to be either Neighbourhood Services or Environmental Health..

- A Member welcomed the proposal to appoint an Officer, but felt it would not be reasonable for the postholder to be entirely responsible for the output from the Hub.

The Deputy Chief Executive felt that the Council would provide the support necessary to the postholder and the existing structure of teams and meetings would form the basis of that

support. The Hub already worked effectively, the role of the postholder was to bring services together, as such the capacity to build relationships was important.

- Effective partnership working was based on all involved delivering their roles, where there currently any areas for development?

The Deputy Chief Executive considered that the nature of the Hub's work enabled self-policing of partner contributions; he set out the process for dealing with referrals to the Hub and noted in four years no issues with partners undertaking responses had been raised. Were a partner to be found not to be contributing as anticipated a concern would be raised. The Terms of Reference for the Hub set out the expectations of partners and effectively acted as a contract.

RESOLVED - 1) That the Panel had reviewed report CS.08/22 and assessed the performance of the Carlisle Local Focus Hub.

2) That Sergeant Blain circulate the Hub performance framework to the Panel.

HWSP.17/22 JAMES STREET BATHS AND TURKISH HEALTH SUITE FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Chair welcomed Ms Minns, Mrs Yeates and Mr Yeates as representatives of The Friends of Carlisle Victorian Baths and Turkish Baths (The Friends) to the meeting. A presentation was delivered covering: The Friends' aim for the facility; the Vision and Need for the Health Suite in the context of heritage, community value, significance; proposals to extend the facility to include the 10m and 20m pools to ensure the long term viability by extending the offer at the site to include hydrotherapy, treatment rooms, retail space, a community launderette and a new reception; the potential of the facility in relation to tourism, economic growth and health and wellbeing; a low to medium intervention for the suite; partnership working' Borderlands funding.

The Friends suggested that the Panel consider making the following recommendations:

1. Recommend to the Executive that the Friends Group be allowed 8 - 10 months to complete an AHF funded feasibility study and business Plan (RIBA Stage 1) before the Council progresses to Community Consultation, Order of Costs and Economic Appraisal/Outline Business Case.
2. Recommend that budget be allocated to enable the Turkish Baths to continue to operate until the 1970 pool is scheduled for demolition.
3. Recommend to the Executive that Officers work with the Friends Group to explore a Community Asset Transfer and progress options for the James Street Public Baths; and provide an update to the August meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel.

In considering the presentation, Members raised the following questions and comments:

- A Member congratulated the group on securing AHF funding to conduct a feasibility study and noted that the Friends had a lot of work to do in relation to it, he asked for further detail on the timeline for that work.

Ms Minns responded that the given timeline for the feasibility study was rather conservative and it was anticipated that the work would be complete in 4-5 month, hence the proposed recommendation 3, as the Friends anticipated being able to submit an update to the Panel in August 2022. The Council needed to advise what would happen to the health suite in the interim following demolition of the 1970s pool and provide budget funding to enable the facility to remain open.

- From its reopening in July 2021 to January 2022 the health suite's had generated an income of £12,694, for the same period of time operational costs were £79,179; what kind marketing plans and costs were in place for post Covid operation of the facility?

Ms Minns noted that the operational costs had not been referenced in the report to the Panel. The Friends' presentation was not a business plan rather it was a Vision for the health suite. The current size of the facility restricted its total visitor capacity at any one time and therefore meant it had limited viability. On that basis, the Friends proposal was to expand the site with the inclusion of the 10m and 20m pools to increase the available space and services offered. The structural work required to implement those changes would be minimal. The proposed update to the Panel in August 2022 would include details relating to marketing, and it was hoped that if the proposals were agreed that the facility would provide a new visitor attraction to the city.

- A Member asked the Leader and Deputy Chief Executive what the impact of approving the Friends' proposals would be given that a contract to demolish The Baths had already been entered into?

The Leader stated that it was well understood that the Business Case for the Sands Centre Redevelopment was predicated on the demolition of the existing pools site. The Council had no budget available to fund its continued operation, as such the Pools would close when the Sands Centre came into operation in the autumn. It was a challenge for the Council to spend 6.5 times more on operating the Turkish Baths than was generated in income. The Borderlands funding for the demolition and making good works at The Pools would only become available ownership of those facilities had transferred to that organisation. Therefore, a period of closure of the Turkish Baths would be required to enable the demolition of the 1970 pool to be carried out.

Ms Minns responded that the Officer report made clear that the transfer of GLL staff from the existing pools site to the Sands Centre would commence in summer and was expected to complete in September 2022. The demolition of The Pools was scheduled for early 2023 which meant that the Turkish Baths would be closed for a number of months. Emptying the pools in the Turkish Baths would cause them to deteriorate and leave the site open to vandalism. The closure of the Turkish Baths had not been included as an assumption in the Sands Centre Redevelopment Business Case, as such Council had not voted to approve it, nor had the public been advised of it. People had been advised that increased use would guarantee the future of the facility not funding.

The Deputy Chief Executive noted that in relation to the Borderlands Station Gateway project there remained work to do in relation to technical matters, and further clarity was needed in respect of the works required at the Turkish Baths and Victorian Health Suite. It was also unclear who would operate the facilities at the Turkish Baths going forward. GLL would not be present at the site (having moved to the Sands Centre) and it may not be inclined to do so. It was noted that the Friends envisaged a different market for the site than for the Sands, and the Deputy Chief Executive indicated that Officers would be happy to work with The Friends going forward, but considered that there were many difficult issues in relation to the demolition of the existing 1970s pool and the transition of the Turkish Baths site.

Mrs Yeates commented that the Council's plans to close the 1970 pool facility had been in place for 5 years, she expressed disappointment that the future of the Turkish Baths had not been developed earlier.

Regarding the Friends' suggested recommendation 2, the Leader gave an overview of the formal processes in relation to Local Government Reorganisation which would impact the Council's control of its budget: following the inception of a Joint Committee in mid-March / early April 2022, Carlisle City Council would cede control of its budget to the Joint Committee. From then on budgetary allocations would need to be ratified by the Joint Committee. Therefore, it was necessary to broaden any development of the Turkish Baths over a longer timescale. The Leader emphasised that he was not seeking to close the door on the project, but merely sought to highlight the landscape in which decisions would be made, he noted that monies, although a factor, would not be the principal determinant in whether the site remained open, but rather the progression of matters outlined by the Deputy Chief Executive above. In terms of the suggested recommendations 1 and 3 he considered them to be feasible.

In considering the Friends' presentation, Members raised the following questions and comments:

- A Member thanked The Friends for their presentation and noted that it presented a different offer for the site's future. In relation to increased usage figures she felt caution was needed as they were likely still impacted by Covid 19 restrictions or concerns. She expressed disappointment that the report did not recommend that the matter be referred to the Executive for a decision.

The Vice Chair advised any referral to the Executive would be considered when Members determined the Panel's recommendations.

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted an overview of the key findings of the Feasibility Study for James Street Baths and adjoining Grade II listed Turkish Health Suite that had been commissioned for Carlisle City Council by Cumbria County Council.

The study formed part of the ongoing project development work for the Borderland funded Carlisle Station Improvements project, which was being led by Cumbria County Council. The report identified a number of potentially feasible uses for the building and set out four indicative / potential development schemes for the building, with incrementally greater levels of intervention and cost.

In considering the Feasibility Study Members raised the following comments and questions:

- In relation to the Corporate Implications Property Services section of the report, a Member commented that it was not accurate to say that following valuation advice it was envisaged that the James Street assets would be disposed of; Council had indicated that it needed to identify a solution for the Turkish Baths.

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that the section of the report served to note that a valuation had been undertaken and that the site would become a non-operational asset. The default position of the Council's Asset Management Plan was to dispose of non-operational assets, the Deputy Chief Executive understood that the reference had been included on that basis, he emphasised that it did not indicate the direction of travel for Council.

- At its July 2021 meeting, Council agreed a motion to pledge that "Subject to a sustainable business plan that can show the viability of the Victorian/Edwardian health suite, the council

will retain the building for the health and well-being purposes it was originally intended." Was that still the intention?

The Leader affirmed the intention that the site be retained for health and wellbeing use. It was not yet known whether such a use was feasible in the long term but it remained the preferred option.

The Member welcomed the Leader's response, he further asked: what level of engagement was taking place between Officers and The Friends in terms of asset transfer, and the level of engagement between Mott MacDonald and The Friends?

Moreover, he commented that The Friends' proposals may offer the best opportunity for the site, which he did not wish to see in circumstances similar to those of the Central Plaza. He sought assurance that the Council would seek ever closer working relationship with The Friends and other relevant partners.

The Leader acknowledged the Member's concerns regarding the Central Plaza and set out the differences between that site and the Turkish Baths in terms of ownership and Listing status. Proposals for a Community Asset Transfer seemed logical, but as yet no direct talks on the matter had taken place. The biggest challenge to taking the site forward was Local Government Reorganisation and the City Council's loss of budget sovereignty. The principal aim for the site was for it to remain as a public facility, at the current stage of proposal development, however, that outcome could not be guaranteed, but it was one the Leader was prepared to work towards.

The Deputy Chief Executive added that in terms of working with The Friends, Mott MacDonald had not been requested to do so as part of its study which was the first stage of options development. Officers had met with The Friends a number of times, including a site visit and he reiterated his willingness for that to continue.

In response the Member commented that the securing of granting funding to conduct a Feasibility Study and develop a Business Plan, demonstrated the funder's confidence in The Friends' proposal. Regarding the Mott MacDonald Feasibility Study he made the following observations:

- In respect of the examples included in the Study of similar facilities in other areas, those which had been closed had been the most costly to return to use;
- The Turkish Baths would not be in competition with the facilities at the redeveloped Sands Centre;
- Any future pricing structure for use of the Turkish Baths was not likely to be cost prohibitive as there were a number of existing examples in the district of privately operated spa facilities.
- The transfer of the 1970s pool site to Borderlands presented an issue for the running of the Turkish Baths site, what options were open to prevent deterioration of the Turkish Baths?

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that regarding dilapidation of the site, its precise construction was not known versus the cost of refurbishment. The comments on cost of use had not meant to give the impression people would not pay more to use the facility in future, rather they related to the potential impact of use if prices were to be increased with the site remaining in its current condition: other uses would be needed to attract users paying a higher fee.

The Sands Centre redevelopment, through the closure of the 1970s pool site had been a trigger for the development of the Station Gateway project which would see works undertaken to the front and rear of the Station site including the Victorian Health Suite car park. Those

works would be carried out with a phased approach, the precise timeline of which was still to be determined; the Deputy Chief Executive undertook to provide the Panel with the timeline for those works when they became available.

The Member responded that were there to be a period of months between the closure and demolition of the 1970s pool that all options to keep the Turkish Baths open, including exploring whether GLL was prepared to continue to operate the site be considered.

- Had any discussions with social prescribers to identify funding to assist The Friends taken place?

The Deputy Chief Executive noted that The Friends had been successful in securing grant funding. The Council supported such groups and the Funding Officer was able to provide advice on available pots of funding.

The Panel gave consideration to The Friends suggested recommendations and agreed to take 1 and 3 forward.

In relation to recommendation 2, a Member commented that they wished to see that taken forward also, he proposed an amended version of The Friends suggested recommendation as follows: That the Executive consider options and potential operators for keeping the Turkish Baths open after the new Sands pool opens until such time demolition begins and identify a budget to enable that to happen.

The Leader noted the necessity of the recommendation on the basis that, were an appropriate option / potential operator to be found, budget may be identified at that time. It was anticipated that the level of budget required would be a de minimis sum that may be authorised via a Portfolio Holder decision.

The proposal was put to the vote, but was not accepted.

RESOLVED - 1) That the Panel had reviewed report ED.45/21 and the Mott MacDonald Feasibility Study.

2) That the Panel recommend to Executive that the Friends Group be allowed 8-10 months to complete the AHF funded feasibility study and business plan (RIBA Stage 1) before Council progresses to Community Consultation, Order of Costs and Economic Appraisal/Outline Business Case.

3) That the Panel recommend to Executive that Officers work with the Friends Group to explore a Community Asset Transfer and progress options for the James Street Public Baths; and provide an update to the August meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel.

4) That the Deputy Chief Executive circulate to the Panel, when available:

- the timeline of works for the 1970s pool demolition; and,
- details of the design and procurement stages for the Borderlands Station Gateway Project.

The Panel adjourned at 12:10 and reconvened at 12:22.

HWSP.18/22 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME, ACTION AND ENFORCEMENT STRATEGY - UPDATE ON RECENT ACTIVITY

The Neighbourhood Services Manager presented an update on activity following approval of the Local Environmental Crime, Action and Enforcement Strategy in June 2021 (CS.10/22). The report covered work of the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers and street cleaning teams and provided further information on enviro-crime enforcement, court outcomes, fly-tipping at recycling sites over Christmas and New Year, engine idling, new enforcement vehicles, verge clearance, litter strategy and success stories. Slides were displayed on screen illustrating work undertaken in relation to the Strategy.

In considering the update Members raised the following comments and questions:

- Requests for additional bins were often declined on the basis of the associated revenue costs, was there any opportunity for the Executive to consider a revised budget?

The Neighbourhood Services Manager explained that the Strategy set out the criteria for determining whether a bin was required which included; the location of the nearest bin, level of litter, distance to shops etc. Consideration may also be given to trialling a bin in the suggested location. The Strategy also set out a scoring matrix which Officers used to decide whether a new bin was appropriate. The matter of bin provision was not so much related to resource but rather effectiveness, it needed to be demonstrated that any further provision would generate the required outcome.

- Did the Council refurbish and/or replace bins?

The Neighbourhood Services Manager confirmed that the Council did have a refurbishment and replacement programme for litter bins.

- Was consideration being given to the use of underground bins for household refuse collection?

The Neighbourhood Services Manager advised that there were no plans to introduce underground bins as they were cost prohibitive and required specialist equipment for emptying and cleaning.

The Member asked whether the cost of such provision could be met for new housing development through the levy of a planning obligation?

The Neighbourhood Services Manager responded that large developments such as the St Cuthbert's Garden Village may create an opportunity to explore different options for refuse and recycling collections, but underground bins were perhaps unrealistic.

- Residents were provided with various receptacles for different types of recyclates, yet when collected by the Council they were discharged into a single vehicle.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager explained that the collection vehicle was separated into two compartments so the different recyclates remained separate and were tipped as separate loads. Carlisle had very low levels of recyclate contamination due to the separation of different materials.

The Vice Chair thanked the Neighbourhood Services Manager for the report and the work of his staff.

RESOLVED - That the Local Environmental Crime, Action and Enforcement Strategy: Update on recent Activity report (CS.10/22) be noted.

HWSP.19/22 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22

The Policy and Performance Officer submitted the Quarter 3 2021/22 performance against the current Service Standards and a summary of the Carlisle Plan 2021-23 actions as defined in the Plan. Performance against the Panel's 2021/22 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were also included (PC.01/22).

With reference to Key Action 11 of the Draft Carlisle Plan 2021-23 - Delivering the Green Spaces Strategy and supporting the delivery of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), a Member asked whether the work on the LCWIP was now complete.

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that the LCWIP was being delivered by Cumbria County Council, and that the City Council had responded to its consultation. Once the final review had taken place on 23 February 2022, it was anticipated that annual programmes would be developed, should Members wish it, update reports may be provided to the Panel.

RESOLVED - That the Quarter 3 Performance Report 2021/22 (PC.01/22) be noted.

HWSP.20/22 OVERVIEW REPORT

The Policy and Performance Officer submitted report OS.05/22 providing an overview of matters relating to the work of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel. The latest Notice of Executive Key Decisions was published on 21 January 2022, it contained no items within the Panel's remit.

In relation to the Panel's Work Programme, the Policy and Performance Officer advised that the following items would not be submitted to the Panel's meeting on 7 April 2022: Local Government Reorganisation and Cumbria Coastal Strategy and Shoreline Management Plan. The Panel agreed to those items being included in its 2022/23 Work Programme.

A Member proposed that the following items be added to the Panel's Work Programme: Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and Turkish Baths. The proposal was seconded and the Panel indicated its assent.

RESOLVED - 1) That the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Key Decision items relevant to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel be noted (OS.05/22).

2) That the following items be removed from the Panel's meeting of 7 April 2022: Local Government Reorganisation and Cumbria Coastal Strategy and Shoreline Management Plan.

3) That the following items be added the Panel's Work Programme for 2022/23: Cumbria Coastal Strategy and Shoreline Management Plan; Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans; and, Turkish Baths.

The Meeting ended at: 12:57